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Voluntary Public

Date: 7/13/2012

GAIN Report Number: E70031

EU-27

Post: Brussels USEU

EFSA confirms opinion on safety of animal cloning

Report Categories:

Biotechnology and Other New Production

Technologies

Livestock and Products

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Report Highlights:

On July 5, 2012, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published an update of its scientific statement on animal clones and their offspring for food production. EFSA's findings from this latest review reiterated its earlier statement that, with regard to food safety, there is no indication of any difference between food derived from healthy clones or their offspring and food from healthy conventionally bred animals.

General Information:

On July 5, 2012, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published an [update of its scientific statement](#) [1] on animal clones and their offspring for food production. As mandated by the European Commission, EFSA examined new scientific information that had become available since its previous report in 2010. EFSA's findings from this latest review reiterated its earlier statement that, with regard to food safety, there is no indication of any difference between food derived from healthy clones or their offspring and food from healthy conventionally bred animals. The available scientific data also provided no evidence to suggest a risk to genetic diversity, biodiversity or the environment from clones or their offspring compared to conventionally bred animals. EFSA nevertheless felt that animal health and welfare remained a matter for concern, due to the increased number of deaths at all stages of clones' development. EFSA noted, however, that this concern did not extend to offspring of clones that were conventionally bred as they appeared to develop normally. A press release of the EFSA opinion is available at: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/120705.htm>.

Background

The European Commission (EC) expects to have a draft regulation for animal cloning and the marketing of food products derived from cloned animals and their offspring by spring 2013. In preparation for this proposed regulation, the EC launched a period of [public consultation](#) [2] from May 3, 2012 to September 3, 2012. The EC is also conducting an impact assessment, which should conclude at the end of 2012. EFSA's latest review is also part of these preparations.

Food from clones and their offspring is currently covered under the 1997 Novel Foods regulation. In 2008, the EC proposed a fundamental reform of the EU novel foods regulation to better manage and encourage innovation in food; food from clones and offspring was more explicitly addressed in this revision of the regulation. The proposal failed to be approved, however, as feelings ran high on the subject of cloning, with the European Parliament calling for an outright ban on cloning and food from clones and their offspring. After several revisions and years of negotiation, the proposal went to Conciliation, and in March 2011, it failed to be adopted as the European Parliament and Council could not agree on the handling of food from clones and their offspring. This experience provided the catalyst for a call for a separate regulation on cloning to encompass both the act of cloning and food products derived from it.

For more background info see earlier reports from USEU Brussels on this issue:

Report Number	Title	Date Released
E60023	Proposed revision of EU novel foods regulation failed to win approval	04/14/2011
E60004	Proposed Novel Foods Regulation could impede Animal Product Exports	01/28/2011
E50027	Update on Status of the Novel Foods Proposal - 2nd Reading Phase	03/30/2010
E49010	EC Orientation Debate on Animal Cloning	01/30/2009

E48084	Review of the animal cloning situation in the EU	07/25/2008
E48014	Proposal for a Novel Foods Framework Regulation	01/30/2008
E48006	EFSA releases Draft Opinion on Animal Cloning	01/15/2008
These reports can be accessed through the FAS website http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/attacherep/default.asp .		

^[1] <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/2794.pdf>

^[2] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dgs_consultations/animal_cloning_consultation_en.htm